

HIGH LEVEL GROUP

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DIMENSION OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY (ESDIS)

Recommendation

**concerning the implementation of the eEurope action line:
"Establish a European diploma for basic information technology
skills, with decentralised certification procedures"**

(Actors: Member States, European Commission; Deadline: end 2001)

Recalling that:

The Lisbon European Council at its meetings: a) in Lisbon, March 2000, concluded that: "...a European diploma for basic IT skills should be established" and b) in Feira, June 2000, endorsed an eEurope Action Plan with a specific action line which provided the mechanisms and deadlines for achieving the above Lisbon goal as: "Establish a European diploma for basic information technology skills, with decentralised certification procedures". With: actors - European Commission, Member States and deadline: end 2001.

Recalling that:

In the eEurope action plan concerning this action line, the "High Level Group on the Employment and Social Dimension of the Information Society" (ESDIS), composed of Member State representatives, and chaired by the Commission, is mandated to monitor progress towards the fulfilment of this action.

Recalling that:

In its monitoring role, ESDIS has identified existing schemes that could potentially fulfil the above action line commitment, among which, was the ECDL - European Computer Driving Licence. The conclusion of this exercise, contained in a Commission working document¹, was: "To meet this objective, the vast majority of Member States are promoting the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)."

Recalling that:

The ECDL, currently exists as a Europe wide, basic IT accreditation scheme widely recognised by firms, their employees, social partners as well as by some Member States sponsored vocational training schemes. The concept owner, the "ECDL foundation" is a not for profit organisation set up originally by the Council for European Professional Informatics Societies (CEPIS) which itself is a respected body representing the IT professions in Europe.

¹ (Extract from SEC(2001)222 Commission staff working document 'Benchmarking Report following-up the 'Strategies for jobs in the Information Society'.)

Recognising that:

Registration of candidates (issue of skill cards) and the delivery of the ECDL award is entrusted to national ECDL foundation member societies within the Member States using their own implementation structures which includes different fee charging mechanisms.

Recognising that:

Member States officially recognised vocational training certificates are validated within the individual Member States, and that in this context a Europe wide scheme could, where appropriate, be taken into account in national schemes.

Recalling that:

ESDIS, at its meeting of 15th June 2001, invited the ECDL foundation to present the ECDL as the basis for fulfilling the requirements of the above referenced eEurope action line and, as a result, convened an expert sub group, meeting on September 24th 2001, to advise it on the feasibility of this.

Recalling that:

The expert sub group concluded that the ECDL was currently the only Europe wide basic IT skills accreditation scheme which has gained broad acceptance. Other similar accreditation schemes exist either to support proprietary products or only at a national level. Most of these latter are integrated in training courses or exist as part of larger national accreditation or diploma arrangements.

Recommends to the COMMISSION:

That the ECDL be accepted as a Europe wide basic IT accreditation scheme, fulfilling the referenced eEurope2002 action line intention, without prejudice to either existing national schemes or the possibility of including other schemes. Moreover, the future direction of a European basic IT skills diploma should be further elaborated under the "eLearning action plan" as envisaged there.